

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION

TEL: 880-2-883-7150-4

FAX: 880-2-9881677, 9885688

E-MAIL: DhakaPA@state.gov

WEBSITE: <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov>



PRESS RELEASE

US Government Provides US\$100,000 to Ensure Food Supply in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Rat Infestation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Destroys almost 90% of Standing Crops

DHAKA, APRIL 30 -- The United States Government has provided US \$100,000 as an emergency response to alleviate the suffering of the people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts caused by a severe rat infestation and devastation of key food sources. This phenomenon occurs every 40-50 years as a result of gregarious bamboo flowering. As the bamboo flowers, the population of rats in the affected areas grows exponentially due to the sudden overabundance of food. Once the rats have eaten all the bamboo fruit, they turn to crops and stored grain, rapidly devouring everything in their path. In some areas, rats devastated entire fields in less than 48 hours, causing up to 90% crop damage and jeopardizing the food supply for more than 25,000 families in the hill districts. In response, the US Government through the Agency for International Development (USAID) will fund efforts by CARE in partnership with UNDP to provide indigenous seeds to affected farmers so they can plant new crops before the onset of the monsoon.

USAID is the principal U.S. Government development agency and is active in more than 100 countries around the world. In 2007, the United States provided \$82 million in development assistance to the people of Bangladesh. From 1971 to 2007, the United States provided more than \$5 billion in development assistance to Bangladesh, with over half of that amount in food aid.

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Note: A Bangla translation of this article is also available at the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section, Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)